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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/603,402	06/24/2003	Michael S. Denny	60027.0192US01/BS # 02375	4851
39262 7590 12/20/2007 MERCHANT & GOULD BELLSOUTH CORPORATION P.O. BOX 2903 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402			EXAMINER ADDY, THJUAN KNOWLIN	
			ART UNIT 2614	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 12/20/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/603,402

Applicant(s)

DENNY ET AL.

Examiner

Thjuan K. Addy

Art Unit

2614

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 September 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 24 June 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's amendment filed on September 26, 2007 has been entered. Claims 1, 18, 21, 29, 32, and 36 have been amended. No claims have been cancelled. No claims have been added. Claims 1-37 are still pending in this application, with claims 1, 18, 21, 29, 32, and 36 being independent.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-15 and 18-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okon et al. (US 6,504,920), in view of Joseph et al. (US 5,721,763).

3. In regards to claims 1, 21, 32, and 36, Okon discloses a method, telecommunications switching point, and telecommunications bridging station of and for creating an area party line (e.g., conversation between callers having common interests), comprising: receiving a first telephone call (for example, the first call is from a "prior caller") at a first local call station (See Fig. 1 and telephone network 14) directly over a first telecommunication link, the first telephone call providing an area party line indication (e.g., selected topic); receiving a second telephone call (for example, the

second call is from a "new caller") at the first local call station (See Fig. 1 and telephone network 14) directly over a second telecommunications link, the second telephone call providing the area party line indication (e.g., selected topic); and in response to receiving the area party line indication of the first and second telephone calls, bridging the first telephone call to the second telephone call at the first local call station to establish an area party line between the first telephone call and the second telephone call (See col. 1 lines 55-65 and col. 3 lines 47-56). Okon, however, does not disclose wherein the first local call station is configured to accommodate further bridging of calls received subsequent to the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line established between the first telephone call and second telephone call.

Joseph, however, does disclose wherein the first local call station is configured to accommodate further bridging of calls received subsequent to the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line (e.g., chat session) established between the first telephone call and second telephone call (See col. 3 lines 4-28).

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate this feature within the method, as a way of allowing multiple parties, within a particular area, to establish or join/bridge into a telephonic discussion via chat session.

4. In regards to claims 2 and 22, Okon discloses all of claims 2 and 22 limitations, except the method, wherein the first telephone call and the second telephone call are landline calls, the first telecommunication link and the second telecommunication line are landlines, and the first local call station comprises a landline SSP. Okon, however,

does teach a telephone network 14, which may be read as a network, such as a PSTN, which provides landline services, and in which case uses an SSP (See col. 2 lines 24-33 and col. 2-3 lines 66-5). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate these features within the method, as a way of allowing landline/wired users to be able to establish a conversation(s) with other users sharing a common interest.

5. In regards to claims 3 and 23, Okon discloses the method, wherein the first telephone call and the second telephone call are wireless telephone calls, the first telecommunication link and the second telecommunication link are wireless links, and the first local call station comprises a wireless telephone base station (See col. 2 lines 35-41).

6. In regards to claims 4 and 24, Okon discloses the method, further comprising: receiving a third telephone call at a second local call station over a third telecommunication link, the third telephone call providing the area party line indication for the first local call station; transferring the third telephone call from the second local call station to the first local call station; receiving the third telephone call transferred from the second local call station at the first local call station; and in response to receiving the third telephone call with the area party line indication, bridging the third telephone call with the first telephone call and the second telephone call to further establish the area party line between the first telephone call, the second telephone call, and the third telephone call (See col. 1 lines 55-65, col. 3 lines 47-56, and col. 6-7 lines 66-3).

7. In regards to claims 5, 6, 19, 25, 26, 30, and 33, Okon discloses the method and telecommunications switching point, wherein the first and second telephone calls are landline calls over landline telecommunication links to the first local call station (See Fig. 1 and telephone network 14), wherein the local call station is a landline SSP, and wherein the third telephone call is a wireless telephone call and the second local call station (See Fig. 1 and second network) is a base station, and wherein transferring the third telephone call comprises directing the wireless telephone call from the base station to the landline SSP (See Fig. 1, col. 2 lines 35-41, and col. 6-7 lines 66-3).

8. In regards to claims 7 and 27, Okon discloses the method, wherein the first and second telephone calls are landline calls over landline telecommunication links to the first local call station, wherein the first local call station is a first landline SSP, and wherein the third telephone call is a landline telephone call and the second local call station is a second landline SSP, and wherein transferring the third telephone call comprises directing the landline telephone call from the second landline SSP over the public switched telephone network to the first landline SSP based on the indication of the area party line of the first landline SSP provided by the third telephone call (See Fig. 1, telephone network 14, plurality of callers 16, and col. 6-7 lines 66-3).

9. In regards to claims 8, 20, 28, and 31, Okon discloses the method, wherein directing the landline telephone call from the second landline SSP over the public switched telephone network comprises directing the landline telephone call from the second landline SSP over a long distance network to the public switched telephone network of the first landline SSP (See col. 4 lines 42-50).

10. In regards to claim 9, Okon discloses the method, further comprising: detecting whether the first local call station has reached a maximum area party line capacity (for example, a suitable partner or conversation is cannot be found or is busy); and when the first local call station has reached a maximum area party line capacity, then providing a message (e.g., prompt or indication that the suitable partner or conversation cannot be found or is busy) to the next incoming call with an area party line indication (See col. 4-5 lines 61-3 and col. 5 lines 46-55).

11. In regards to claims 10 and 15, Okon discloses the method, wherein the message includes an option to be called back (for example, placed in a waiting list) to an area party line when available, the method further comprising: receiving a selection of the option and storing a number (for example, access information, such as the caller's telephone number) for the incoming call that has provided the selection; detecting when capacity at the first local call station can accommodate an incoming call and then calling the line identified by the number; and upon receiving an answer to the call to the line (for example, the caller is subsequently paired), bridging the line into the area party line (See col. 4-5 lines 61-20).

12. In regards to claims 11 and 12, Okon discloses the method, further comprising upon detecting that the wireless telephone call has switched to a different base station, providing an option to the wireless telephone call to switch to a different area party line, and wherein switching the wireless call to a different landline SSP occurs only when the wireless telephone call selects that option to switch (See col. 4 lines 64-66).

13. In regards to claims 13 and 14, Okon discloses the method, wherein the third telephone call providing the area party line indication for the first local call station comprises the third telephone call dialing an area code and an exchange identifying the first local call station, and dialing a four digit area party line indicator (See col. 3 lines 5-7 and col. 4 lines 9-13).

14. In regards to claims 18 and 29, Okon discloses a method for creating an area party line (e.g., conversation between callers having common interests), comprising: receiving a first telephone call (for example, the first call is from a "prior caller") at a first local station (See Fig. 1 and telephone network 14) directly over a first telecommunication link, the first telephone call providing an area party line indication (e.g., selected topic); receiving a second telephone call (for example, the second call is from a "new caller") at a second local call station (See Fig. 1 and second network) over a second telecommunication link, the second telephone call providing the area party line indication (e.g., selected topic) for the first local call station; transferring the second telephone call from the second local call station to the first local call station based on the area party line indication of the second telephone call; receiving the second telephone call transferred from the second local call station at the first local call station; and bridging the second telephone call with the first telephone call at the first local call station to establish the area party line between the first telephone call and the second telephone call (See col. 1 lines 55-65 and col. 3 lines 47-56). Okon, however, does not disclose wherein the first local call station is configured to accommodate further bridging of calls received subsequent to the first telephone call and the second telephone call to

the area party line established between the first telephone call and second telephone call. Joseph, however, does disclose wherein the first local call station is configured to accommodate further bridging of calls received subsequent to the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line (e.g., chat session) established between the first telephone call and second telephone call (See col. 3 lines 4-28).

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate this feature within the method, as a way of allowing multiple parties, within a particular area, to establish or join/bridge into a telephonic discussion via chat session.

15. In regards to claim 34, Okon discloses the telecommunications switching point, wherein the telecommunications links are landlines (See Fig. 1, plurality of callers 16, telephone network 14, col. 2 lines 24-33, and col. 2-3 lines 66-5).

16. In regards to claim 35, Okon discloses the telecommunications switching point, wherein the telecommunications links are wireless (See Fig. 1, caller, second network, and col. 2 lines 35-41).

17. In regards to claim 37, Okon discloses the telecommunications bridging station, wherein the telecommunication switching points of the plurality are identified by unique exchange numbers (See col. 2 lines 24-33 and col. 2-3 lines 66-5).

18. Claims 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okon et al. (US 6,504,920), in view of Joseph et al. (US 5,721,763), and further in view of Bradshaw, Jr. (US 6,608,820).

19. In regards to claim 16, Okon and Joseph disclose all of claim 16 limitations, except the method, further comprising: after bridging the third telephone call with the first and second telephone calls to further establish the area party line, receiving a selection from the first telephone call and the second telephone call to enter a private forum; removing the first telephone call and the second telephone call from the area party line upon receiving the selection to enter the private forum; and establishing a connection between the first telephone call and the second telephone call separate from the area party line after removing the first telephone call and the second telephone call from the area party line. Bradshaw, Jr., however, does disclose after bridging the third telephone (e.g., second subject party [CP2]) call with the first (e.g., controlling party [Cg Pty]) and second telephone (e.g., first subject party [CP1]) calls to further establish the area party line (e.g., conference call), receiving a selection (e.g., depression of "1" and "Send") from the first telephone call and the second telephone call to enter a private forum; removing the first telephone call and the second telephone call from the area party line upon receiving the selection to enter the private forum; and establishing a connection between the first telephone call and the second telephone call separate from the area party line after removing the first telephone call and the second telephone call from the area party line (See col. 5 lines 50-53). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate these

features within the method, as a way of controlling a conference call, thus allowing a conference call controlling party to selectively have private conversations with one of the subject parties in the conference call.

20. In regards to claim 17, Okon and Joseph disclose all of claim 17 limitations, except the method, further comprising: after establishing the connection between the first and second telephone calls separate from the area party line, receiving a selection from the first telephone call and the second telephone call to exit the private forum; ending the connection between the first telephone call and the second telephone call separate from the area party line upon receiving the selection to exit the private forum; and bridging the first telephone call the second telephone call with the third telephone call to add the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line after ending the connection between the first telephone cal and the second telephone call. Bradshaw, Jr., however, does disclose after establishing the connection between the first and second telephone calls separate from the area party line, receiving a selection (e.g., depression of "Send") from the first telephone call and the second telephone call to exit the private forum; ending the connection between the first telephone call and the second telephone call separate from the area party line upon receiving the selection to exit the private forum; and bridging the first telephone call the second telephone call with the third telephone call to add the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line after ending the connection between the first telephone cal and the second telephone call (See col. 5 lines 53-55).

Response to Arguments

21. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-37 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

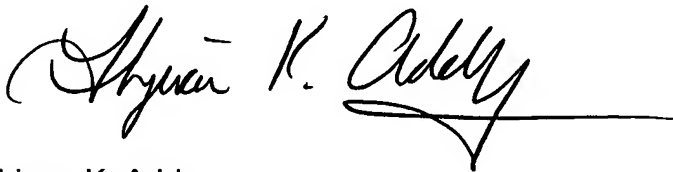
22. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

23. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

24. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thjuan K. Addy whose telephone number is (571) 272-7486. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8:30-5:00pm.

25. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ahmad Matar can be reached on (571) 272-7488. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

26. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thjuan K. Addy". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Thjuan K. Addy
Patent Examiner
AU 2614